



**Request for Proposal  
Civil Rights and Innovation Themed Districts  
of the Northwest Quadrant of the Birmingham City Center  
Birmingham, Alabama**

**Issued December 17, 2019**

**INTRODUCTION.**

Notice is hereby given that Urban Impact Inc. and REV Birmingham are seeking the services of an experienced and qualified planning firm (“Consultant”) to provide general city planning services for the Northwest Quadrant of the Birmingham City Center which includes the Civil Rights and Innovation Themed Districts of Birmingham, Alabama.

The selected Consultant will enter into an Agreement for Professional Consultant Services (“Agreement”) with [Urban Impact] to prepare a master development plan Northwest Quadrant of the Birmingham City Center specifically focused on the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts in Birmingham, Alabama.

**ABOUT URBAN IMPACT AND REV BIRMINGHAM.**

Urban Impact Inc. (“UII”) is a 501(c)(3) local place-based community and economic development agency that advances asset building, economic opportunity and revitalization of Birmingham, Alabama’s Historic 4th Avenue Business District and Civil Rights District through support and services to assist individuals, businesses, and developers. UII strives to lead, build, and grow traditionally underserved and historic African-American commercial districts and community. Our mission is to develop, implement and drive creative community-based strategies and programs that enhance economic opportunity, builds inclusive and equitable ecosystems, facilitates historic preservation, and ensures a dynamic, impactful framework for sustainable growth and development.

REV Birmingham (“REV”) is a 501(c)(3) economic development organization with a mission is to create vibrant commercial districts. REV has a vision of Birmingham as the most vibrant commercial market in the southeast where everyone can realize their dreams. We work with community stakeholders to facilitate community visioning, strategic planning & project management, real estate & development assistance services, technical assistance to creative startups and community businesses and strategic initiatives that develop local economies. REV’s initiatives generate positive results for partners, enhance tax revenue, generate and sustain jobs, increase tourism and positively influence perceptions about the City of Birmingham.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT.**

The Downtown Northwest Quadrant of Birmingham, Alabama is home to two districts that are critical to the economic and cultural future of Birmingham, the Civil Rights District and National Monument and the (soon to be renamed) Innovation District. Additionally, these districts become important linkages to neighborhoods that are adjacent to the City Center such as Smithfield and Fountain Heights. These historic neighborhoods have been physically separated from the City Center by interstate highway infrastructure. In order to advance the revitalization and redevelopment of the Downtown North West Quadrant with intentional connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods, a master development plan for the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts is needed to support and empower place-based community development organizations and grass roots leadership working to bring vision to reality.

The boundaries of the focus area are described as I-65 on the west to I-20/59 on the north and 18<sup>th</sup> Street N on the east and the railroad corridor on the south. Key connections into and out of the district to adjacent neighborhoods are to be considered.

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals for the creation of a master development plan for the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts. All plans should take into consideration the unique history, demographics, assets and current development patterns of the Birmingham Civil Rights District, the Innovation District, the City Center and greater City of Birmingham. It is the hope that strong Civil Rights and Innovation Districts will bring about revitalization and redevelopment across the city and strengthen the City of Birmingham as a whole.

## **THE OBJECTIVE.**

Building from the high-level planning of the recently-completed Birmingham City Center Master Plan and other market assessments, the master development plan for the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts should create consensus around a development and revitalization plan consistent with the City's goals for inclusive growth and innovation with actionable strategies supported by market data. The plan will provide community stakeholders and place-based economic development organizations who are driving the implementation process, concepts for development opportunities, locations for appropriate uses, public/private investment, economic and physical connections to adjacent neighborhoods and programing needs.

In this area, there are two place-based revitalization organizations that have historically been the champions for the advancement of neighborhoods within it, UII and REV. UII is focused on the Civil Rights District, National Monument and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Historic African American Business District. REV's mission is highly-focused on the growth and vibrancy of Birmingham's City Center, a four-square mile area considered the central business district of the City. In the NW quadrant, REV is leading efforts to realize the vision for an Innovation District as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. It is the desire of both organizations, as well as the community at large, that these two districts support and enhance each other and grow together. The focuses and themes for these two districts within the quadrant should not only complement each other but feed each other's growth.

UII and REV are prepared to lead and assist in the development and execution of this plan. As stated before, the goal is not to repeat planning that has already been done, but to build on completed processes and enable action towards development and revitalization. A cohesive plan must emerge from this process.

### **SPECIFICATIONS FOR WORK.**

The Consultant will provide qualified technical and professional personnel to perform duties and responsibilities assigned under the terms of an Agreement, namely to plan, organize, and direct master development planning activities and strategies for the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts, including but not limited to demographics, environmental, conservation, housing, infrastructure, and resilient planning activities.

The master development plan should include (but is not limited to) site analysis and assessment, making recommendations, using a comprehensive and inclusive public process during preparation, working with UII and REV staff to prepare a plan and implementation strategy, identifying project costs and funding sources, utilizing information provided through the community, and identify specific public projects with costs for improvements. It would be beneficial for the plan to reflect the long-range development plans and infrastructure needs of the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts. The plan should establish a vision for the future of the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts and provide a roadmap for how to achieve that vision.

Conceptual Site Plan - As part of the project proposal, the Consultant will provide a conceptual site plan showing the location of all buildings and internal circulation, as well as gathering spaces, parking, landscaping, etc. This conceptual site plan will consider:

- pedestrian and vehicular connectivity,
- existing adjacent development,
- recommended design guidelines
- thematic overlays and regulatory recommendations (as part of conceptual development).

The preservation of historic buildings, civil rights and innovation themes are essential.

More specifically, the Civil Rights and Innovation District plan may include, but is not limited to including, the following:

1) Community Impact/Inclusion Plan

- a. How existing businesses and property owners grow with the Civil Rights and Innovation Districts and the larger community benefits of a master development plan. Specific strategies related to the following should be included:
  - i. minority residents in nearby or adjacent neighborhoods have a voice in the plan;
  - ii. minority business and property owners in the districts have clear avenues for benefitting from expected growth as a result of the plan; and
  - iii. local and minority citizens are not relegated to minor opportunities.

2) Market Data Supporting Specific Catalytic Development Locations, Uses and Phases

- a. Build out potential for housing, hotel and commercial.

- b. Business incubation plan – 2<sup>nd</sup> Incubator/Accelerator.
        - c. Assess workforce program needs and opportunities.
- 3) Corridor Focused Plan Phases
  - a. 16<sup>th</sup> Street priority
    - i. Bring together various development opportunities to a cohesive “place” in the next 90 days.
  - b. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North
    - i. Plans for development and programming that links downtown to DT West.
  - c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North
    - i. A development strategy that connects the Innovation District with DT and re-imagines this street as a pedestrian-oriented “main street”.
  - d. 1st Avenue North
    - i. A development strategy that connects the Innovation District to east and west neighborhoods via higher-density transportation options and establishes gateways for the Innovation District.
- 4) 14<sup>th</sup> Street North
  - a. A plan for connecting the UAB and Parkside areas to the Innovation District and North to the Federal Buildings.
- 5) Adjacent Neighborhoods
  - a. Develop strategies that link and promote growth of adjacent neighborhoods.
  - b. Identify development barriers and solutions to promote connection, walkability and the use of alternative modes of transportation along Abraham Woods Blvd (8<sup>th</sup> Avenue North/W), 16<sup>th</sup> Street North, and other potential neighborhood connections.
- 6) Catalytic Public Park/Trail Investment
  - a. The Switch
    - i. A design and implementation plan and sustainability model for the former rail switch that exists in three blocks.
  - b. Kelly Ingram Park Enhancements
    - i. Determine what is needed to improve and sustain the park as sacred ground that both memorializes Civil Rights history and accommodates the significant number of tourists visiting the National Monument.
- 7) Catalytic Development Sites
  - a. Identification of catalytic development sites and projects with development concepts required to spur growth.
  - b. Development Program Concept(s) – Provide concepts for a mixed-use development and meeting the following parameters:
    - A mix of uses that includes restaurants, upper story residential units, small-scale retail, outdoor gathering spaces, and other compatible uses consistent with the overall theme.
    - Streetscape improvements including sidewalks, on-street parking, landscaping, lighting, and pedestrian amenities.
    - A multi-modal transportation network that includes pedestrian connections, safe and efficient vehicular circulation, and bicycle facilities.

- 8) Architectural Theme – Develop an overarching architectural theme for the districts consistent with the City of Birmingham proposed Character Codes
- 9) Parking and Mobility
  - a. A Parking and mobility development and management plan to be a catalyst for, as well as support, growth.
- 10) Gateway Enhancement Plans
  - a. 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North are the Civil Rights District’s gateways and need a plan to ensure the entrance to the district is positive.
- 11) District management and Maintenance Sustainability Plan
  - a. Assess Business Improvement District expansion priorities and feasibility.

### **RESPONSE CRITERIA.**

The proposal shall clearly address all of the information requested herein. To achieve a uniform review process and obtain the maximum degree of comparability, proposals must be organized and contain all information as specified below:

- A. **Cover Letter.** Maximum of two pages serving as an executive summary which shall include an understanding of the scope of services.
- B. **Brief Company Profile.** General company information including number of employees, location of company headquarters and branch offices, number of years in business and organization, disciplines, and staffing. Describe the general qualification of the firm as they relate to the work proposed within this RFP.
- C. **Organization and Staffing.** Provide a list of the Consultant’s employees and agents which the Consultant anticipates assigning to this project. This list shall include a summary of the qualifications, licenses, experience of each individual, and the work to be performed by each individual. UII and REV will retain under its Agreement with the successful Consultant the right of approval of all persons performing under such Agreement.
- D. **Description of Approach.** The proposal should demonstrate the Consultant’s knowledge of the needs and objectives of the work proposed under this RFP.
- E. **Project Schedule.** The proposal should identify a detailed tentative project schedule within which the Consultant should complete the work proposed under this RFP.
- F. **Community Engagement.** The proposal should include a description of Community Design/Engagement Workshops for residents and stakeholders to be implemented as part of due diligence and continued public awareness and feedback. Such workshops are a requirement given the need of the consultant team to ideate with the community.
- G. **Cost Proposal.** The cost proposal shall include a fee proposal for primary deliverables as well as the hourly rate for services. Delineation of any sub-consultant’s fee schedule is

required, if applicable. The cost proposal should include hourly billable cost of each team member.

- H. **References.** Provide three references for prior comparable work of the Consultant, including name, address, contact person and phone number of the municipality/company, length of time services were provided, and a description of the services provided.

Consultants interested shall submit five (5) copies of its expression of interest and qualification in a sealed package addressed to:

Ivan W. Holloway  
Urban Impact, Inc  
**C/O Northwest Quadrant Master Development Plan 2020**  
1721 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Ste 102  
Birmingham, AL 35203

Please make sure the project name is clearly visible on the outside of the package. Submit the requested documentation by close of business on January 31, 2019.

#### **EVALUATION PROCEDURE.**

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Experience and knowledge relating to general planning, resolution/ordinance writing, zoning regulation updates, subdivision regulation updates, and long-range/comprehensive planning.
2. Quality of work on similar or related projects previously undertaken.
3. Qualifications and experience of staff and sub-consultant staff. This effort has an emphasis on the historic African American business district and locally themed Civil Rights District; therefore, it is expected that special effort will be given to include African American planners and designers in any response to this RFP.
4. Proximity of geographic location to the Project.
5. Projected workload that will potentially run concurrent with these projects that could affect the firm's ability to adequately staff these projects.

The selection of professional consultant(s) shall be based on qualification information exhibited in both written and graphic form. Interviews may be required.

The steering committee may select a short list of Consultants for further evaluation in the form of an oral presentation and interview.

UII and REV reserve the sole and absolute right to use whatever criteria they desire in evaluating the proposals and selecting the Consultant. Until a definitive written Agreement is entered into, no Consultant should rely to its detriment on this RFP, its response to the RFP, or any oral or written discussions with UII or REV, no rights of any Consultant are created, and no obligations of UII or REV shall exist.

## **RESPONSE DEADLINES AND GENERAL PROJECT TIMELINE.**

There are short-term immediate needs and long-term development objectives. Development pressures along the critical 16<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor require immediate planning to bring some of these opportunities to reality, answer the needs for infrastructure, prevent negative uses from occurring and ensure a cohesive group of development projects that support the goal of a walkable and vibrant urban core. This corridor needs a plan within 90 days.

12/17 2019 – Issue RFP

1/8/2020– Questions Due

1/15/ 2020 – Answers to Questions Posted

01/31/ 2020 – RFP responses due

02/7/ 2020 – Steering committee reviews and scores responses. Interviews scheduled if necessary. Steering committee selects consultant.

05/28/ 2020 – 16<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor plan completed for review.

09/30/ 2020 – Draft Quadrant master development plan – 1<sup>st</sup> round review.

## **AMENDMENTS TO REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS.**

The steering committee reserves the right to amend the RFP by addendum prior to the final proposal submittal date. Amendments will be posted.

## **MAP OF PROJECT AREA.**

Please see attachment.

## **QUESTIONS.**

If you have any questions concerning the RFP, please contact Ivan Holloway [nwrfp@urbanimpactbirmingham.org](mailto:nwrfp@urbanimpactbirmingham.org) no later than January 8, 2019. If appropriate, the question asked and its answer (but not the identity of the questioner) will be posted on the master development plan website and emailed to all parties expressing an interest in the RFP.

Firms are prohibited from contacting any other officer, director, employee, or agent about the RFP, and any such contact may result in the disqualification of a related proposal.

# Attachment 1

